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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WOMEN - You Too Can Fight!

Farmers have produced an abundance of food this year, but all that food is not harvested yet. The farmer has lost some of his help to the Armed services, and to industry. He can't pick up seasonal labor as he did in peace-time. The farmer's wife, the daughter - the whole farm family is working - working harder and longer hours. The farm operator today averages 75 hours a week - that's more than a 10-hour day every day in the week.

This is where you come in - all you women who have even a few days or even a few hours spare time. The Women's Land Army is recruiting women to help ease the farm labor shortage. And hundreds of women are joining up. Since the last of April over 150,000 women have been placed on farms through the State Agricultural Extension Services.

Right now in communities all over the country there are potatoes to be harvested, apples to be picked, late vegetables to be gathered. It is harvest time the country over.

Perhaps you can help with the harvest in your own community. If so, your County Agricultural Agent, or the United States Employment Service will place you on a farm. Women sign up for the amount of spare time they can give. Some work the year-round, others can only be away from home a few weeks - and others, with full-time jobs, spend their vacations, or only a day at a time. Every hour helps.

Perhaps you'd like to know about some of the women and girls who have joined the Women's Land Army - these women and girls who are fighting on the food front.

Mrs. Sumner Sewall, wife of the Governor of Maine, spent several weeks this summer pulling weeds, cultivating lettuce and gathering turnips and beets. Her

back muscles ached and lettuce stained her finger nails but she couldn't let food go to waste when she was healthy and had two good hands to work with. "We cannot feed the world in these difficult war days by speech-making, or have victory on talk -- everyone must buckle down", she said.

In Michigan, Bessie Shapero left her full-time job as children's librarian for a month's vacation to cultivate vegetables, help with farm chores and load hay. Bessie says, "It wasn't as hard work as I thought it would be, even though each type of hoeing has a new set of aches. And it was fun meeting new people and new situations. I recommend it as a good vacation for anybody".

Mrs. Grover Wenton from New York City has been working in commercial truck crops. Her husband was in the war in North Africa. Mrs. Wenton's eyes light up as she tells of getting a letter from her husband saying how proud he was of her for working on a farm to help feed him.

The 21 year-old daughter of Rear Admiral Byrd, Bolling Byrd, worked in a dairy for 6 weeks this summer. She got up at 4:30 every morning and with her helper took complete charge of the barn and the milking of 50 registered Jerseys. And she enjoyed it.

Many women have time for farm work, but they're just waiting for someone to start them on the idea. Perhaps they are waiting for you to get them interested. You could start with a group of church friends, or your club members, or your neighbors. A housewife in California, Mrs. Jaffee, heard a radio appeal for workers to save the bean crop. But her baby was only 18 months old, so Mrs. Jaffee couldn't go out to pick the beans herself. But she knew the importance of getting the bean harvested. She talked to her next door neighbor and they called in a third. It all ended by three women taking turns in the bean patch, with Mrs. Jaffee staying home cooking the evening meal for the four families, the while keeping a watchful eye over the baby. The bean pickers were tired and dirty at the end of the day

but they had fun discussing the day's activities around Mrs. Jaffee's supper table.

Your County Agent knows the harvest needs in your community and he knows the farmers who are in the greatest need for workers. Write him, or talk with him. You'll find him at your county seat, town or city. Help with the harvesting of crops needed for food for your own table, for our boys in camp and on fighting fronts, and for our Allies. You'll have fun, and you'll feel the same deep satisfaction that hundreds of other women are enjoying who are already fighting in the Women's Land Army.

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